

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL POSS DUPE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 1796

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP

SUBJECT: AL-HAMDI VISIT TO UN AND US

BEGIN SUMMARY. ON MAY 25 PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR BASINDWA INFORMED ME THAT YARG HAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE THAT PRESEDENT AL-HAMDI WILL ADDRESS UNGA IN MID-NOVEMBER. BASINDWA THEN ASKED IF USG WOULD BE WILLING TO INVITE AL-HAMDI FOR AT LEAST ONEDAY WORKING VISIT TO WASHINGTON AT THAT TIME. MAKING NO PROMISES OR COMMITMENTS I TOLD HIM I WOULD CONVEY HIS REQUEST IMMEDIATELY TO THE DEPARTMENT WITH A STRONG RECOMMENDATION THAT A FAVORABLE REPLY BE GIVEN IF THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE PERMITS. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MAY 25 MOHAMMAD BASINDWA SPECIAL ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI, ASKED THAT I CALL ON HIM IN HIS OFFICE. DURING THE CONVERSATION WHICH FOLLOWED BASINDWA INFORMED ME THAT YEMEN GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI WILL TRAVEL TO NEW YORK SOME TIME IN MID-NOVEMBER TO ADDRESS THE UNGA. BASINDWA SAID THAT THE YEMEN GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO VERY MUCH WELCOME OPPORTUNITY FOR AL-HAMDI TO VISIT WASHINGTON EVEN IF ONLY FOR A DAY DURING WHICH HE MIGHT HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND OTHER US GOVERNMENT LEADERS.

2. BASINDWA CONTINUED THAT YEMEN GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO HOPE THAT AL-HAMDI MIGHT THEN BE ABLE TO SPEND TWO OR THREE DAYS TRAVELLING THROUGH THE US BEFORE RETURNING
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TO YEMEN THROUGH EUROPE WHERE HE WOULD VISIT SEVERAL OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES.

3. BASINDWA EMPHASIZED THAT YEMEN GOVERNMENT REALIZES THAT US PRESENTLY INVOLVED IN ELECTIONS AND THAT USG MIGHT FIND IT DIFFICULT TO WELCIME AL-HAMDI IN NOVEMBER. BASINDWA STRESSED AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THAT YEMEN GOVERNMENT IS MAKING STRONG EFFORT TO OPEN YEMEN UP TO THE WEST AND BELIEVES THAT A VISIT BY AL-HAMDI TO WASHINGTON WOULD FURTHER DRAMATIZE AND UNDERScore PRESENT GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND YEMEN, THEREBY ENCOURAGING INTER ALIA US INVESTMENT IN THE COUNTRY. BASINDWA NOTED THAT AL-HAMDI CONTINUES TO BE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE FROM THE SOVIETS TO VISIT MOSCOW BUT HE HAS NO DESIRE TO DO SO, PREFERRING TO VISIT THE WEST AND THE US IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

4. I INFORMED BASINDWA THAT I COULD, OF COURSE, MAKE NO COMMITMENT BUT THAT I WOULD CONVEY HIS REQUEST IMMEDIATELY TO THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDING THAT A FAVORABLE REPLY BE GIVEN IF THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE PERMITTED. IN THIS REGARD I NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE IS ALWAYS HEAVY AND I IMPRESSED ON HIM THAT THE YARG SHOULD NOT GET ITS HOPES UP.

5. COMMENT. IF THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY THAT AN INFORMAL ONE-DAY WORKING VISIT COULD BE ARRANGED IN MID-NOVEMBER I WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT A POSITIVE USG RESPONSE BE GIVEN TO THIS YEMENI REQUEST. AL-HAMDI HAS INDEED COME A LONG WAY IN THE LAST TWO YEARS SINCE HIS ACCESSION TO POWER AND HIS PRAGMATIC, MODERATE POLICIES WOULD GET A FURTHER IMPORTANT PSYCHO-POLITICAL BOOST FROM SUCH A VISIT, PARTICULARLY IN THE WAKE OF WHAT NOW APPEARS TO BE THE BEGINNING OF A MAJOR US/SAUDI MILITARY SALES PROGRAM IN ADDITION TO A GROWING AND MUCH-APPRECIATED US TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. SINCE THE YARG HAS APPARENTLY ALREADY DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE THAT AL-HAMDI WILL GO TO NEW YORK IN ANY CASE, I BELIEVE THIS IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO TAKE ADVANTAGAE OF HIS PRESENCE IN ORDER TO ENHANCE FURTHER OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. MOREOVER. SUCH A VISIT COMING AFTER THE
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RECENT VISIT OF SULTAN QABOOS OF OMAN WOULD ALSO BE A CLEAR INDICATION OF OUR INTENTION TO SUPPORT ALL MODERATE FORCES IN THE AREA AT A TIME WHEN THERE ARE REGIONAL FEARS THAT THE SOVIETS AND THEIR LOCAL FRIENDS NOW CONSIDER THE LOWER RED SEA AREA AS THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW EVENTS IN ANGOLA.
SCOTES

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